

# ANNUAL REPORT

## 2023



[www.shea4nh.org](http://www.shea4nh.org)

# INTRODUCTION

## About us

The Seabrook-Hamptons Estuary Alliance (SHEA), a New Hampshire non-profit corporation, formed in 2013 to protect the coastal and aquatic resources and preserve the Hampton-Seabrook estuarine system through education, community outreach, and research.

## Our Mission

We are dedicated to preserving, restoring, and championing the Hampton-Seabrook Estuary and its watershed's health and social functions to support a thriving and diverse habitat, enhance water quality, mitigate flood risks, and offer sustainable recreational and commercial opportunities.

## Our Vision

The Hampton-Seabrook Estuary thrives as a nursery and haven, hosting diverse ecosystems that support healthy populations of fish, shellfish, birds, plants, and native species. Surrounding communities embrace its aesthetic, recreational, and economic benefits, recognizing the interconnected habitats, litter-free beaches, and clean waters as the foundation of their identity.

With responsible development, we safeguard both natural resources and infrastructure, enabling the estuary and its watershed to naturally adapt to the challenges of climate change, including groundwater and sea level rise, coastal storm surges, and flooding. Our vision is a sustainable coexistence where residents, visitors, and local governments respect and enjoy the enduring vitality of this precious ecosystem.



# MEET OUR TEAM



**Jay  
Diener**

*President*



**Deborah  
Wrobel**

*Vice  
President*



**Shawn  
Hanson**

*Treasurer/Secretary*



**Matthew  
Cranney**

*Member*



**Rebecca  
Irelan**

*Member*

*(Jan-Aug 2023)*



**Rayann  
Dionne**

*Executive Director*



# OVERVIEW

In 2023, the Estuary Management Plan was finalized, marking a significant milestone for the Seabrook-Hamptons Estuary Alliance (SHEA). Efforts to implement the plan began immediately, with a focus on strengthening partnerships with local, regional, state, and federal entities. These collaborations centered on using the Estuary Management Plan as a guiding document for effective estuary protection and management.



## Key Accomplishments

- Pursuing New Funding Opportunities: SHEA sought new funding and grant opportunities to support its ongoing and future initiatives.
- Community Outreach and Education:
  - Engaged Seabrook Middle School in estuary-related outreach and education programs.
  - Supported the establishment of the Seabrook Coastal Resilience Team, which began its work in early 2023.
- Event Highlights: Hosted the Coastal Resource and Resilience Fair in May, in collaboration with regional partners, to raise awareness and promote community engagement.
- Partnership with NOAA: Collaborated with NOAA to develop an Economic Analysis Plan, set for completion in 2024, to explore economic factors and flood vulnerability in the Seabrook, Hampton, and Hampton Falls areas.
- Expanding Outreach: Partnered with the Seacoast Science Center Kayak Tours to enhance public engagement and awareness of salt marsh ecosystems.

## Organization Growth

SHEA's capacity expanded with the addition of a grant-funded Coastal Conservation Coordinator, supported by a Project of Special Merit from NHDES. This new team member, hired at the end of 2023, will begin work in 2024 to further SHEA's mission.

SHEA remains committed to advancing estuary conservation and resilience through collaboration, education, and proactive management.



# OUTREACH, PRESENTATIONS & WORKSHOPS

In 2023, SHEA hosted a Resilience Fair and estuary-related presentations and workshops that were all well-attended by the local communities.

## Salt Marsh Haying Video Presentation

On March 7, 2023, SHEA hosted a viewing of the Salt Marsh Haying at the Seabrook Library.

## Update on Status of Seacoast Greenway

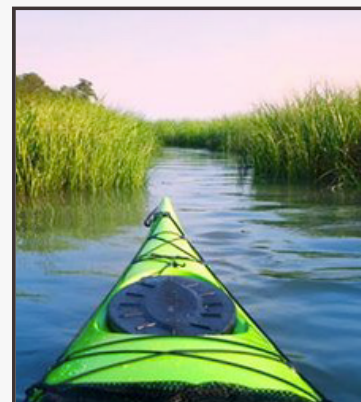
On March 21, SHEA hosted a virtual workshop where Scott Bogle from RPC provided an update on the Seacoast Greenway.

## Photography Workshop

On September 13, SHEA hosted a photography workshop with Christine Linnehan Sununu, in preparation for the annual National Estuaries Week Photography Contest.

## National Estuaries Week Kayak Tour

The first Salt Marsh Kayak Tour, planned for September 23, 2023, with the Seacoast Science Center, was canceled due to weather. Given, strong interest in the event has led to plans for multiple tours in 2024.



# GRANTS



## NHDES Coastal Program Technical Assistance

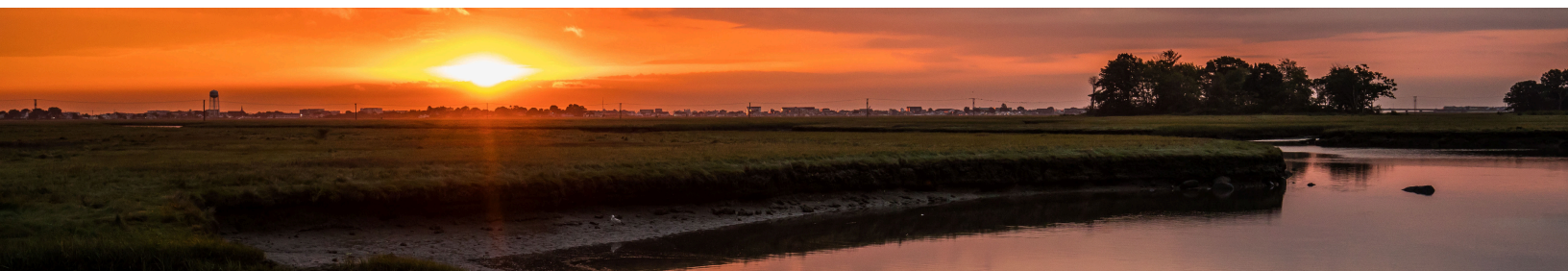
SHEA continued work funded by the \$15,000 Technical Assistance Grant awarded in 2022, to complete a variety of public outreach, educational, and research activities. This specific grant ended June 30, 2023, and a new 18-month Technical Assistance Grant was awarded in 2023. This grant is provided by National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) Office for Coastal Management under the Coastal Zone Management Act, in conjunction with the NHDES Coastal Program. Key activities in 2023 included:

- Attending and participating in the NH Coastal Adaptation Workgroup (CAW).
- Supporting the Hampton Coastal Hazards Adaptation Team (CHAT) with administrative, technical, and meeting assistance.
- Assisting the newly formed Seabrook Coastal Resilience Team.
- Hosting public outreach events, workshops, and webinars.
- Collaborating with UNH Cooperative Extension and NH SeaGrant on climate and estuary programs for Seabrook Middle School, including a saltmarsh field study for 6th graders in October.
- Supporting updates and progress on the Estuary Management Plan.
- Updating the 2020 Conservation Land Projects using new high-resolution tidal wetlands maps, with all projects either completed or significantly advanced.



## Piscataqua Region Estuaries Partnership

SHEA was awarded \$30,000 from PREP for each of the next 5 years, starting in January 2023, to fund the Hampton-Seabrook Estuary Collaborative (HSE) Coordinator position, as well as the SHEA Executive Director for projects related to the implementation of SHEA's Estuary Management Plan.



# GRANTS



## Wildlife Management Institute and NERACOOS

In 2022, SHEA was awarded funding from US Fish and Wildlife via the Wildlife Management Institute and NOAA via NERACOOS to additionally support the HSE Coordinator Position. This award allowed SHEA to provide additional funding for the position through the end of 2023.



## NH State Conservation Committee & PREP

SHEA continued to receive funding, from the NH State Conservation Committee (\$21,900) and Piscataqua Region Estuaries Partnership (\$13,000) to complete the Estuary Management Plan for the Hampton-Seabrook Estuary. These two grants are for the initial existing document research, the production of the Vision, Management Objectives, and Management Strategies chapters, as well as the collection or creation of maps and supporting documents. The grant period was from May 2021 through April 30, 2023, by which time the Estuary Management Plan was completed.



## NHCP - Project of Special Merit

In early 2023, SHEA successfully pursued a funding opportunity, the NHDES Project of Special Merit, a \$89,000 grant for an 18-month period. This funding, awarded in October 2023, enabled SHEA to establish a new position, the Coastal Conservation Coordinator (CCC), while continuing to support the HSE Coordinator role. The CCC is tasked with working alongside Conservation Commissions in Hampton, Hampton Falls, and Seabrook to advance land conservation efforts. A key focus of this role is developing town-specific strategies to facilitate marsh migration. SHEA hired the new part-time employee in December 2023, with work officially beginning in January 2024.





# PROJECT SPOTLIGHT

## HAMPTON



The Hampton Coastal Hazards Adaptation Team (CHAT), formed in January 2019, continued to meet throughout 2023. The group of municipal and residential representatives is charged with researching and identifying potential adaptation strategies for the Town to consider as it attempts to cope with and adapt to increasing tidal and storm-surge flooding.

### CHAT's Key Focus Areas

- Improve coordination of flood hazard management and adaptation efforts in Hampton.
- Investigate, analyze, and prioritize flood management and adaptation strategies and present recommendations to Hampton's municipal boards and commissions for consideration.
- Inform residents about the flood hazard management and adaptation options the Town is considering and gather community input.
- Offer educational and public outreach opportunities on flood hazard management and adaptation strategies.

Throughout 2023, CHAT continued to advance the draft recommendations developed in 2020, by refining, presenting, and promoting these adaptation strategies for dealing with the impacts of sea level rise. Some areas of focus were developing to develop an implementation committee for Hampton's Master Plan; reviewing ordinances/warrant articles to address resilience; flood ready neighborhoods; Kings Highway drainage; water quality issues of floodwaters; surveying homeowners in high flood areas (Voluntary Elevation and Property Acquisition Survey). CHAT meeting notes, member updates and announcements are posted on SHEA's website. View the CHAT page [here](#).

# PROJECT SPOTLIGHT

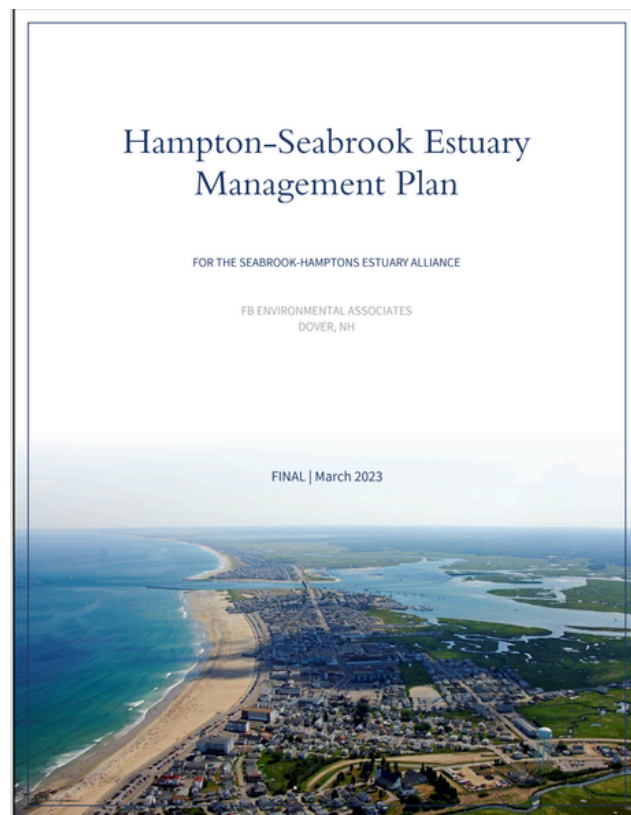
## Seabrook Coastal Resilience Team (CRT)

In 2023, the Seabrook Coastal Resilience Team began to meet to address resilience issues in the town of Seabrook. They developed and submitted a Coastal Resilience Grant Proposal for repairs/replacement of dune walkovers, as beach access and dunes are key areas of concern. They looked at 19 public walkways to evaluate current conditions and considered ways to improve and support dune structures.



## Hampton-Seabrook Estuary Management Plan

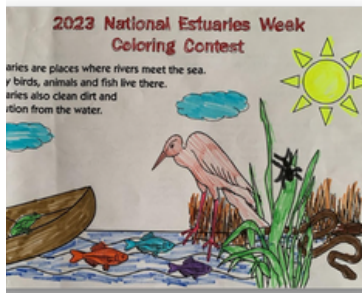
FB Environmental, hired in 2021 to research and write the Estuary Management Plan (EMP), completed the plan in early 2023. Similar to a Master Plan, the EMP provides guidance for all three of the towns (Hampton, Seabrook, Hampton Falls) bordering the estuary on ways to protect and preserve the estuary while still providing for various commercial and recreational uses. This working document provides a roadmap for collaborative management of the estuary. The EMP includes a summary of current environmental conditions and uses of the estuary, existing protection policies and regulations, future threats, a vision for the estuary, and management strategies and action steps to meet the goals and objectives developed for the estuary. The SHEA Board met throughout 2023 to prioritize the work in the EMP and to develop steps to implementing the plan.





# NATIONAL ESTUARIES WEEK

The SHEA National Estuaries Week Photo Contest is held over National Estuaries Week every September. SHEA accepted and selected winning photos of the estuary in several different categories. Winners in each category received cash awards. Funding for the National Estuaries Photo Contest winners comes from the Hampton, Hampton Falls, and Seabrook Conservation Commissions. The winning photos are featured on the SHEA website and in promotional materials. Many excellent photographs were submitted in 2023; shared below are some of the winning photos. National Estuaries Week outreach included holding a Children's Estuary Coloring Contest, hosted by local libraries in Hampton, Seabrook, and Hampton Falls. SHEA was impressed by their exceptional use of color! See some entries below.



Photos & Colorings: top left: Debbie Gaudreau, coloring Age 6, Matt Parker, Sergio Bonilla, Matt Parker, Sergio Bonilla, coloring Age 8, Debbie Gaudreau



# Key Estuary Partnerships

Members of the SHEA Board and SHEA's Executive Director regularly attend meetings with a wide range of local, State, and Federal partners to advance estuary-related projects and proposals, including the Conservation Commissions and Planning Boards in Hampton, Seabrook, and Hampton Falls, the Coastal Adaptation Workgroup, the Hampton-Seabrook Estuary Collaborative, the Piscataqua Region Estuaries Partnership, and the Great Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve.

## **Hampton-Seabrook Estuary (HSE) Collaborative**

The Hampton-Seabrook Estuary Collaborative, a group of federal, state, and local entities that have a shared focus of improving the long-term health and vitality of the Estuary and its communities, continued to meet throughout 2023. SHEA participates as a member of the Steering Committee of the Collaborative. The Steering Committee helps plan Collaborative meetings and provides direction for the Collaborative.

In 2023, funding for a Short-Term Coordinator for the Collaborative continued to be provided by NOAA through NERACOOS (Northeastern Regional Association of Coastal Ocean Observing Systems) and by the US Fish and Wildlife through the Wildlife Management Institute.

The Collaborative convened regularly to discuss ongoing and planned projects, consider project partnerships, and discuss ways the Collaborative could take advantage of upcoming project funding opportunities.

- Articulate the value of a landscape-scale approach to coastal ecosystem and community resilience.
- Coordinate and align resources and activities to more effectively provide the science and data to help communities understand, manage, and protect the Estuary.
- Explore near-term opportunities for collaboration that aim to ensure these efforts are mutually supportive, contribute to commonly shared goals for the Estuary, and set the stage for longer-term, more robust monitoring, adaptive management, and restoration.

The partnership includes NOAA, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), US Fish & Wildlife, NHDES, PREP, the Great Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve (GBNERR), the Army Corps of Engineers, and SHEA. With funding provided by the EPA, PREP, and NextEra, a consultant was brought in to help focus and coordinate the efforts of the collaborative. The Collaborative's work will be the basis for determining the health of the key indicators in the estuary, as well as remedial and/or monitoring activities needed to restore and maintain the health of the estuary overall.

## **NH Coastal Adaptation Workgroup (CAW) and Piscataqua Region Estuaries Partnership (PREP) Staff Meetings**

SHEA participates in the NH Coastal Adaptation Workgroup (CAW). In August of 2023, SHEA worked on developing the NOAA Resilience Challenge Grant with CAW. Developing the grant provided an opportunity to outline and detail the critical work needed to implement the Estuary Management Plan.

# Financial Information 2023

SHEA received \$60,788.52 in grants and donations in 2023. Operating expenses, including contractual obligations, contest prizes, speaker fees, supplies and administrative charges totaled \$53,844.29.

## Fiscal Year 2023 Quarterly Financial Report

Fiscal Year 2023	Quarter 1 Jan-Mar	Quarter 2 April-Jun	Quarter 3 July-Sept	Quarter 4 Oct-Dec	Totals Jan-Dec
<b>Checking Account Balance</b>					
Beginning	\$ 1,284.66	\$ 7,440.07	\$ 13,188.08	\$ 9,233.67	
End	\$ 7,440.07	\$ 13,188.08	\$ 9,233.67	\$ 8,228.89	
<b>Revenue</b>					
Grant Reimbursements	\$ 20,338.55	\$ 13,095.34	\$ 2,586.11	\$ 8,136.00	\$ 44,156.00
Ocean Gaming	\$ 4,838.37	\$ 4,374.03	\$ 3,928.08	\$ 2,239.18	\$ 15,379.66
Donation	\$ -	\$ 800.00	\$ -	\$ 100.00	\$ 900.00
Amazon Smile	\$ 13.30	\$ 20.18	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 33.48
Puzzle/Tote purchases	\$ -	\$ 180.00	\$ 19.38	\$ 120.00	\$ 319.38
<b>Total Revenue</b>	\$ 25,190.22	\$ 18,469.55	\$ 6,533.57	\$ 10,595.18	\$ 60,788.52
<b>Expenses</b>					
Contractors	\$ 16,144.00	\$ 7,115.00	\$ 5,699.55	\$ 5,640.00	\$ 34,598.55
Executive Director	\$ 1,412.17	\$ 2,590.46	\$ 2,819.40	\$ 4,573.86	\$ 11,395.89
Admin	\$ 305.00	\$ 950.17	\$ 929.03	\$ 986.10	\$ 3,170.30
Supplies	\$ -	\$ 173.18	\$ 15.03	\$ 47.84	\$ 236.05
Accounting	\$ 100.00	\$ 257.00	\$ -	\$ 120.00	\$ 477.00
Insurance	\$ 205.00	\$ 500.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 705.00
Contest Prizes	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 300.00	\$ 300.00
Speaker Stipend	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 125.00	\$ 125.00
Reimbursement	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 348.26	\$ 348.26
Thank You Gift Cards	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 30.00	\$ 30.00
Fees	\$ -	\$ 19.99	\$ 914.00	\$ 15.00	\$ 948.99
NH Lottery Fee	\$ 250.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 250.00
Gaming Rental Fee	\$ -	\$ 800.00	\$ 800.00	\$ 400.00	\$ 2,000.00
Puzzles - Cost	\$ 923.64	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 923.64
Tote - Cost	\$ -	\$ 805.31	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 805.31
Website Fees	\$ -	\$ 460.60	\$ 240.00	\$ -	\$ 700.60
<b>Total Expenses</b>	\$ 19,034.81	\$ 12,721.54	\$ 10,487.98	\$ 11,599.96	\$ 53,844.29

